In the Claims:

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein said barrier layer is SiN.

3-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein said silicide is selected from the group consisting of cobalt silicide, titanium silicide, tantalum silicide and platinum silicide.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19, wherein said silicide is cobalt silicide.

7-18. (Cancelled)

19. (Currently Amended) A method of programming selected ones of a multiplicity of fuse devices comprising the steps of:

providing said multiplicity of programmable fuse devices having a first resistance, each of said multiplicity including a section comprising a combination of a poly silicon layer covered by a silicide layer, and a barrier layer covering said combination, said barrier layer suitable for transmitting an optical beam therethrough;

directing an optical beam through said barrier layer and onto said silicide layer of at least one of said multiplicity of programmable fuse devices; and

programming said at least one programmable fuse device without rupturing said

combination by increasing the resistance of said at least one programmable fuse device from said first resistance to a second resistance in response to said optical beam being directed onto said silicide layer, wherein said optical beam is in the visual range.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein increasing the resistance of said at least one programmable fuse device comprises the step of removing a portion of said silicide layer.

21-22. (Cancelled)

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 further comprising programming selected ones of said multiplicity of fuse devices by passing a current through said combination of a poly silicon layer and a silicide layer.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23 wherein said step of passing a current comprises the step of providing a current of about 10mA for about 200 microseconds.

25. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 24 wherein said current is generated by connecting a voltage of about 3.3V across said combination.

26. (New) A method of programming selected ones of a multiplicity of fuse devices comprising the steps of:

providing said multiplicity of programmable fuse devices having a first resistance,

each of said multiplicity including a section comprising a combination of a poly silicon layer covered by a silicide layer, and a barrier layer covering said combination, said barrier layer suitable for transmitting an optical beam therethrough;

directing an optical beam through said barrier layer and onto said silicide layer of at least one of said multiplicity of programmable fuse devices; and

programming said at least one programmable fuse device without rupturing said combination by increasing the resistance of said at least one programmable fuse device from said first resistance to a second resistance in response to said optical beam being directed onto said silicide layer, wherein said optical beam is in the NIR (near infrared) range.

27. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein said barrier layer is SiN.

28. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein said silicide is selected from the group consisting of cobalt silicide, titanium silicide, tantalum silicide and platinum silicide.

29. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein said silicide is cobalt silicide.

30. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein increasing the resistance of said at least one programmable fuse device comprises the step of removing a portion of said silicide layer.

31. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein said optical beam is in the visual range.

32. (New) The method of claim 26, further comprising programming selected ones of said multiplicity of fuse devices by passing a current through said combination of a poly silicon layer and a silicide layer.

33. (New) The method of claim 32 wherein said step of passing a current comprises the step of providing a current of about 10mA for about 200 microseconds.

34. (New) The method of claim 33 wherein said current is generated by connecting a voltage of about 3.3V across said combination.